



# Tulane University Medical Center

School of Medicine  
Department of Medicine  
Section of Hematology / Medical Oncology  
1430 Tulane Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70112

(504) 588-5482 Academic Office  
(504) 588-5363 Patient Affairs

W. J. Stuckey, M.D.  
German Beltran, M.D.  
W. Abe Andes, M.D.  
Leonard C. Thomas, M.D.

August 26, 1985

Harold E. Varmas, M.D.  
University of California, San Francisco  
School of Medicine  
Department of Microbiology and Immunology  
San Francisco, California 94143

Dear Dr. Varmas:

Thank you for your letter of August 12 but I only received it a few days ago. I find the issues and questions you pose quite interesting. Unfortunately, I will only be able to give you my opinion based on what I have read and what I have heard communicated to me by both patients and treating physicians.

I think the term AIDS cannot be avoided since it is already embedded in the medical literature, MEDLINE retrieval services and so forth. To attempt to distinguish the 'AIDS virus' from the "XYZ" would not, it seems to me, serve any useful purpose. Further, it may be too soon, or we may end up changing, the notion as to which infected people have or have not developed the disease. Thus, I suspect the "XYZ virus" shortly would become synonymous with the "AIDS virus". The last question posed regarding an eponym is even more interesting. I find it difficult to explain to patients that the HTLV-III is named after a virus that causes leukemia or lymphoma when in fact that represents the problem in only a fraction of patients with AIDS. Thus, a term such HARV (which I assume stands for Human AIDS Related Virus) might be more direct and since it's only mentioned as related to AIDS, it might be more easily discussed with patients. Since descriptions and discussions of the AIDS virus is (at least currently) a clinical and social one, it will no doubt take time to best settle on a name which will be 'respectfully pleasing' to as many people as possible.

In other words I think that the name eventually chosen for this retrovirus will finally become associated with the very severe condition it causes, regardless of its name. Thank you for your questions and I remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Abe".

W. Abe Andes, M.D.  
Professor of Medicine

WAA/tp